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From: General Secretariat of the Council  
To: Permanent Representatives Committee  
Subject: Pilot initiative on return

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The Permanent Representatives Committee is invited to take note of annexed outcome of proceedings of the Strategic Committee on Asylum, Frontiers and Immigration (SCIFA) concerning the pilot initiative on return of irregular migrants to their countries of origin.

In follow-up to the Council Conclusions of 5 June 2014 on Return Policy, the Strategic Committee on Asylum, Frontiers and Immigration (SCIFA) - hereinafter "the Committee" - had a third discussion on the pilot initiative on return. Previous discussions took place on 5/6 May and 19 September 2014.

The Commission informed the Committee about the state of play with regard to the leverage potentially available to the EU and its Member States for encouraging any of the four third countries under consideration for possible selection (Bangladesh, Ghana, Nigeria and Pakistan), in line with the more for more principle, to improve the return rate of irregular migrants from the EU Member States to these countries. The Commission advised selecting not more than two countries, considering overall relevance, suitability, and feasibility of making progress, during this initial pilot phase.

On the basis of the outcome of discussions in the Asia-Oceania Working Group and the Africa Working Group, Bangladesh, Nigeria and Pakistan were considered as potentially suitable countries with which to take work on the return pilot forward, while it was recommended not to include Ghana at this stage with the understanding that the Africa Working Group will review relations with Ghana and its suitability for the pilot in six months' time.

Against that background, the Committee invited the Commission to commence preparations, with the involvement of the EEAS, the EU delegations and interested Member States, for approaching Pakistan, and additionally Bangladesh and Nigeria, on the basis of a prioritisation, with a view to a coordinated implementation of the initiative by the EU and its Member States.

Furthermore, the Commission is invited to keep the Committee informed about future developments with regard to the pilot initiative on return.